

~~SECRET~~Nicaraguan Insurgency ConferenceDCI Talking Points

2 July 1985

Let me welcome all of you to CIA Headquarters for this conference on the Nicaraguan insurgency.

In bringing together analysts and desk officers from the Departments of State and Defense, the National Security Agency, and the Central Intelligence Agency, we hope to challenge traditional points of view and speculate about the future of the anti-Sandinista insurgency and its implications.

As all of you are aware, Nicaragua is an issue of critical importance for this administration and for the country. All the principal officers of our government and a growing proportion of the public and the Congress believe:

- The Sandinista regime's close ties to the USSR, Cuba, and radical states such as Libya pose a clear danger to the security of the United States.
- Moreover, the Sandinistas' persistent efforts to export revolution to the rest of Central America threaten to extinguish all prospects for democratic government in the region.
- Your views about the nature of this threat are important. My own view is that while the media and the Administration-Congressional dialogue has tended to focus on MIGs and other military type threats and the discounting of them, the more serious threat is that of a base for a spreading subversion, ultimately spreading across Central America and into Mexico, Colombia and Peru.

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The key analytical challenges, as I see them, are:

1. Can the anti-Sandinista insurgency remain viable in the face of Managua's massive military buildup?

- What are the rebels' main strengths and weaknesses?

- How committed are they to fighting on, and can they count on growing popular support?

- What might tip the balance in their favor or against them?

2. What actions will the Sandinistas take in the coming months?

- What are their main strengths and weaknesses?

- Will internal resistance to the regime continue to build?

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3. To what lengths will Cuba and the USSR go to protect the Sandinistas?

-- What new arms and equipment should we expect to see?

-- Will there be a new jump in the level of aid and the numbers of advisors?

I encourage you to stretch your imagination today, to examine not only the most likely scenarios, but also the less plausible ones that are often overlooked during our daily routine but could have great consequence if they came to pass. How do you see the end game? What is going on in Managua and elsewhere along the populated Pacific coast? How can we learn more? How do you see the race between consolidation of the Sandinista regime and growing popular dissatisfaction?

Finally, how do you see the relationship between the insurgence in Nicaragua and insurgencies elsewhere? What can we learn from Savimbi's apparent success over almost a decade from the inability of superior Soviet arms to subdue the Afghans. The use of the liberal Catholic-Marxist combination in Nicaragua as a model for the growing Philippine insurgency. By doing so, you will, I trust, be better prepared to handle your analytical tasks when you return to your desks tomorrow, and your government will be better able to make wise and effective policy decisions.

Again, welcome to CIA. I know you will have a fruitful exchange.

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